

South American Evangelical Mission.

LETTER FROM MR. JOHN LINTON.

(No. 3.)

CALLE CORDOBA 873, TUCUMAN, ARGENTINA,
SOUTH AMERICA, Dec. 7, 1896.

THIS is our first printed letter from the field, and it seemed to me to be a good time to write in a time when visible provisions were scarce, as in the other letters there was such abundance; but really not more than now, though we have but eight pence and a little food on hand; we are not yet allowed to speak of want, or have we the honour to say "in hunger and thirst," or "cold and nakedness," as Paul did. Would to God all at home and these people were as rich as we! Our experience is, that this time of poor earthly appearances is the richest in grace that we have yet had together.

Let us begin with

A FEW WORDS OF REJOICING.

Phil. 4 is a good chapter to take. Paul's words "And my God shall fulfil every need of yours

according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus," are very solid footing; the 6th and 7th verses seem to be central in this veteran exhortation. Dear Brother Sallans was reading the 103rd Psalm at our noon prayer hour, and when we called upon our mind to remember all His benefits, or rather to forget as few as possible, we found it very easy to pray with thanksgiving. But another earlier word we might take as a keynote, *i.e.*, "The Lord is at hand." My watch hangs just before me, and its hasty, never-ceasing beat is a true sound of our constant approach to—Eden? No; a "better land"; and not only so, but as the father ran to meet the returning, ragged son, so surely our dear Lord comes "quickly" to meet us, and we can well say, "The Lord is at hand. In nothing be anxious."

Words spoken by Mr. Frost, of the China Inland Mission, are surely very true: "The missionary has special privileges in trials of faith." One needs to come to the end of ways and means to really feel the "everlasting arms."

SUBJECTS FOR THANKSGIVING.

1st. That the lives of the workers are precious in His sight. "The prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." "Pray one for another, that ye may be healed."

2nd. That the number of messengers is constantly increasing, a challenge to ask for greater things. For the need is indeed awful (Matt. 9:38).

3rd. For granting us a faithful brother in Buenos Ayres, who has opened his home to all the workers coming out, and has been for some time most faithfully helping us by receiving and forwarding all our correspondence into the interior at his own expense, so that we have had no need to make a long stay and form a new centre there. You will join with us in giving thanks and offering prayer for dear Brother W. Chas. K. Torre, of Quilmes, Buenos Ayres. He keeps open three meeting places, where the Gospel is preached regularly in Spanish; and his wife has an orphanage, with over thirty dear children on her hands, some of whom gave their hearts to Jesus while we were there; and at the same time he earns his living. He indeed sets us an example by abundant labours.

4th. We praise God for the constant grace and blessing that is with us, a foreshadowing of a great general outpouring on this field, we trust.

5th. For the provision of means which has been better than human calculation, coming from God's own children at Monte Video, Quilmes, Buenos Ayres and Rosario.

Dec. 9th.—N.B.—And now my letter has been so long writing, we praise our Heavenly Father for the supply of our needs from Liverpool, England. Just as the old corn was done the new comes promptly to hand. "Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness!" \$43, or £9, reached us yesterday.

SUBJECTS FOR PRAYER.

Epaphras received honour because he "laboured fervently" in prayer. "The Holy Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." To pray, then, is to be a fellow-worker with the saints and a co-worker with God. Jesus has purchased us to be priests unto God (Rev. 1:6, and 5:10). With what holy joy and awe we should use our office, and seek for needs which are excuses to come into His blessed presence and prove His love; "For every one that asketh receiveth."

Let us pray together:—

1st. For a special baptism of divine love upon every member of the Mission, and for a particular passion for the benighted souls in South-America. "I know of no baptism of fire save that fire of love which took Jesus to the cross." (A. M.) "I would thou wert . . . hot."

2nd. That our whole trust may be in the Almighty, lest we faint at the greatness of the work and retrench or limit our aspirations, being content with little things. 2 Kings 13:14-19.

3rd. For the town of Tucuman and its 49,000 people, who are lost in infidelity and idolatry. It is impressed upon us to seek that two workers be established here, with a Bible-room and depot for sale and forwarding literature to Bolivia, and a mission-room for Spanish meetings. Not a soul stands out for Jesus here. The whole place is entirely free of access.

Fellow-workers, let us give Him no rest until He send forth labourers to this place to reside here. It is the centre of a very large unoccupied neighbourhood. It only costs Bro. S. and I about £2 a month to live here. May we all be clear of the blood of this dying people.

4th. For the opening up of our way to Bolivia and guidance in beginning the work in that intolerant field. We hope to begin our journey in May, 1897.

5th. For Venezuela and the dear fellow-workers there. Also, for Brother Brown, at Monte Video, that he may be blessed in his school teaching and be led out into the full work of the Gospel in Spanish. He has seen much of the Lord's leading so far.

6th. For those in course of preparation, that they may be sped and anointed for service—Chas. Derry, studying medicine in England, and Miss Bessie Poyntz, in training in Liverpool—ask that they may have very special help during these last days at home; Miss M. Locke and Miss C. I. Grant, who, we hope, will be on the way out before you read this letter.

7th. That God will enable us to get large supplies of Spanish Bibles, Gospels, tracts, etc., for sale and distribution among the people. This is a very special need. "Because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth." "Lord, teach us to pray."

Once, when Geo. Muller desired to strengthen the faith of his fellow-workers, he came to them and said,

"I have just received answer to a prayer which I have offered every day for twelve years"; and that was a far greater result than the life-work of most people. "Greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father."

If this Mission is only a means to teach you and me to pray, it will have been to us of untold worth.

THE CENTRAL PLAZA AND A VISIT TO THE CHURCH OF SAN FRANCISCO.

While I write this, I pray that you may use it to increase your love for and interest in these people, and that you may understand their sin, and a sin which grows in the churches at home—that is formality, which always comes forward to supply the attraction where there is lack of power.

Often in the evenings we take our Spanish books and go to the central plaza. Here the social life of Tucuman comes to enjoy the sometimes fresh air and hear the brass band; for fresh air is a luxury here, where the temperature stands near 90 degrees all day. It was at 95 degrees most of the day yesterday, and will be above that to-day, I think.

The plaza takes up a whole block and is very pretty. On all sides of the square are three parallel rows of close-topped, dark green orange trees, all heavily laden with fruit; between the rows are wide, well-paved walks, with abundance of seats in the rows under the trees, and the whole is well lighted by

electricity. In the central square is the laid-out ground, with diagonal walks from each corner, north and south are fountains, east and west the band stands, and in the centre a heavy square pillar, with a statue of General Belgrano.

While seated in the plaza we had seen the tonsured priests up amongst the pillars in the dark church tower. They were pulling the hammers of the bells and sounding a merry rat a ta tat, rat a ta tat, as if they would run a race. We had not thought of going into the service, but on crossing the square at the north-west corner of the plaza on our way home, we came to the long front of the Roman Catholic church of San Francisco, and I felt drawn to see how and what these people worship. There was a straggling stream of worshippers constantly passing in, nearly all young women, dressed in black, many having up-turned chairs upon their heads, and the wealthier with little, dark-skinned girls carrying their chairs for them, for the church provides no seats here, and our hostess told me that was the reason why she did not attend, as she is very stout, and finds the bare floor too hard for her knees. On the top of the flight of three stone steps, which run along the whole front, we found a lot of young men lounging about, smoking, chatting, and walking in for a while and coming out again. We passed in through the large iron gates, which hang between heavy, square stone pillars, and across a narrow court, which also runs along the

whole front and is under the end gallery and choir.

THE CHURCH.

Now we enter the church itself, and the first thing I see is a big priest, in a long, gray gown, kneeling on the stone floor, right in front of the door, but facing the other way. As we enter, he rises and goes out, and we see the church divided into three long aisles, the side aisles narrow and only running as far as the altar rail, and ending each one in a separate shrine, the right shrine to the virgin, and the left to our Lord, having a life-size figure of each. The aisles are separated by massive, square pillars, the first pair forming part of the end wall and being under the choir. There are five pairs, and in the front of each pillar is a wooden confessional box, in which the priest sits while he hears the narration of the penitent's sins, who kneels on a low stool, under a wicket, like that of a ticket office. On the side walls and opposite the pillars are shrines, four on each side wall to match the confessional boxes, the foremost pair of pillars have a flight of stone steps up through them from the side aisle and into a wooden pulpit built high up on the inside and projecting over the congregation.

I stood at the foot of the steps and watched the priest as, in dismal monotone, he repeated again and again the same words, beginning, "Gloria Maria"; and I watched him as he knelt and faced the altar, but his eyes never closed, and he constantly scanned

the congregation, who principally went through the dumb show in the same spirit.

I know right well that those who bow before dumb images are not the only ones who know nothing about prayer. Many who hear the truth know as little as these about really speaking with God. They might pray, but are too lazy to stir themselves to seek His face until He answers them. May God save us from using the church services, eloquent pastor, beautiful hymns, moving music, etc., as an opiate to our soul, while we know not how to wrestle and prevail as kings and priests of God. Have we joy in private prayer, alone with Jesus? Do we ask and receive? Or are we worse than these, even uttering vain repetitions before the God who has given us the truth? We now turn to the altar, which is only to be seen from the centre aisle, at the end of which it is. It is built up like a large organ and gilded all over the face. To our right is the figure of a man, and on the left of a woman, and high up in the centre the picture of a woman, with two other pictures, one on each side lower down. Every niche and shelf is filled with candles of varying lengths, and when it is all lighted up there is a great golden glow quite dazzling. But this is not only a fixed structure; at the foot of the high central picture of the woman hangs a dome-shaped crown, with a soaring dove on top, and under the crown and forward a large burnished figure of a palm-leaf fan; and lower still, a fixed piece, like a

large bell, only it is a cylinder. After the priests have left the pulpit, and while the choir sings and the smoke of incense rises, this upper crown piece slowly descends behind the upper edge of the fan, which closes round it like the petals of a flower, and the whole disappears gradually all the while down the cylindrical bell, and a figure appears descending from the mouth of the bell upon the altar table; the officiating priest approaches and takes something like a spread fan, with a sparkling centre; this he holds before his face and turns slowly to the people, and then to the right, and back to the left; then, replacing it, the choir sings, a little bell is rung, and the service is over.

Such is the worship of the people here. The whole central aisle is occupied by women, a few men being right at the front; most are dressed in black, but many in the most gaudy attire imaginable, and powdered and painted, which seems quite strange to us.

BABYLON.

This is "Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." Bloody, cruel, intolerant. Only two days ago we were both nearly set upon because we wore our hats as a procession went by with the two figures I have mentioned as being on either side of the altar. If any one does not believe that this is Antichrist, let them come and cross the path of her policy and she will soon convince them of the character of her spirit.

Oh, the destruction, the awful doom, that awaits this

usurper of the throne of Jesus our King and all who are deceived by her! Rom. 1 is indeed a picture of this people. May God send forth a spirit of conviction and confirm His own Word. Let us bestir ourselves to duly use our privileges of true worship and prayer and communion through Jesus Christ, lest we have our hearts darkened and are deceived, thinking that worship "in spirit and in truth" is not absolutely necessary.

TEACHING OF THE CHURCH.

I want to show you, not in my own words, what the teaching of the Church of Rome is, so that you may have full confidence in the need of taking the Gospel to these people. I have prayed much that we may not misjudge and condemn where God does not condemn, but be faithful to His revelation of salvation through Jesus.

I have an almanac, which is widely circulated amongst these so-called Christian people. It is printed by a company who sign themselves "Tipografos de la santa sede apostolica," or printers to the holy apostolic see, and is called "Almanaque de la Familia Christiana." In this book the Roman Catholic ways to heaven and hell are pictured over the "Terra-carril de ultratumba," or railway beyond the tomb.

We see that, according to this, God had no need whatever to send his Son to die, as Jesus is not mentioned. No need of atonement, redemption, or the new covenant which Jesus secures to us by His pres-

ence in heaven. We know that only the holy can approach God, and only Jesus was found without spot, and He was able to receive salvation from God for us, buying us with His own blood out of the world. I wish you would turn to Heb. 7:22, and begin at

SPANISH QUOTATION.		INTERPRETATION.
Linea del Paraiso.		Line to Paradise.
Salida de los trenes todas horas.		Trains leave at all hours.
Llegada—Cuando Dios quiere.		Arrive when God wills.
Precio de los billetes.		Price of the tickets.
Clase.		
1a.	Innocencia y sacrificio voluntario.	Innocence and voluntary sacrifice.
2a.	Penitencia y confianza en Dios.	Penitence and confidence in God.
3a.	Arrepentimiento y resignacion.	Repentance and resignation.
Advertencia.—Los niños menor de siete años van gratis con tal que sean llevados en brazos por su madre la Iglesia.		Advertisements.—The little children of seven years go free, being carried in the arms of their mother the Church.

“Jesus became the surety of a better covenant,” underlining, and then connect it with verse 10 of the 8th chapter, “this is the covenant.” Oh, let us take hold on these precious words, for God has seen them to be of such fearful import to us, that He has taken His oath to bind Himself to this promise. These people, we see, are trying to establish their own righteousness, just as any other idolatrous people;

but we know God has shut all out as being full of sin, and we who have believed in Jesus rest from our own works (Heb. 4 : 10), trusting in the completed work of Jesus, that for His sake God will not "remember our sins," and will put His laws into our mind and write

SPANISH QUOTATION.		INTERPRETATION.
Linea del Infirno.		Line to hell.
Salida de los trenes quando el hombre quiere.		Trains leave when man wills.
Llegada—Cuando menos lo piense.		Arrives — Sooner than he thinks.
Precio de los billetes.		Price of the tickets.
Clase.		
1a.	Impiedad.	
2a.	Sensualismo.	
3a.	Indiferentismo.	

Advertencia.—Los que viajen por esta linea podran seguir la del Paraíso, si refrendan su billete ante un sacerdote, antes de empalmar con el tren de la muerte.

Advertisements. — Those who travel by this line can take the line to Paradise, if his ticket is countersigned before a priest, before the junction with the train of the dead.

them upon our heart. We know that the promise was not even made to us, but to Jesus. Gal. 3 : 19. It is handed on to us, through faith in Jesus. See v. 22. Oh, let us remember how entirely salvation is *the gift* of God! and it is for the wicked, and only for them; for salvation is "to be made holy that we may come to God," and only the wicked need making holy; but if we claim holiness of our own, apart from the blood of

Jesus, we are shut out and condemned, being deceived by our own heart, for God says "all have sinned."

You see by this how these people are shut out, not receiving the Gospel and putting all their hope in Jesus and the promise of God, and so by faith receiving that holiness without which no man shall see God.

A PERSONAL WORD.

Dear friends, the reason why so many cannot see the awful need of this people is because they have not entered into rest through believing in Jesus themselves. Turn to Heb. 3, and notice verses 12, 19; ch. 4: 6, 11, and also ch. 5: 8, 9; how unbelief and disobedience mean the same thing, and faith and obedience likewise. So then, let us examine ourselves, and see if we believe in Jesus, and if we obey God's Word. If we have failed to find rest, and do not see these people's needs clearly, the failure is here, surely; for God's covenant is beyond the possibility of short-coming.

Let me speak again about this rest, for I remember hearing a dear friend say, as we talked about helping a dying person: "I did not like to speak such very pointed things, because when I think deeply myself I have great questionings." And why? Is it not because faith is ill directed. This one stands in a belief in the thoroughness of her consecration, and another in a belief that he does

receive grace from God sometimes, and another that he has sought for mercy and God will not deny ; but when a thorough search is made all these things are found faulty ; but, blessed be His name ! turn to Jesus on the cross, and where are the doubts then ? Turn to Jesus as He stands *for us*, our High Priest, our Advocate with the Father, and where is the doubt of acceptance now ? “ Have faith *in God*.” Many may seek and not find ; many may labour and have not rest ; many may quiet themselves by false hopes, and be undeceived by the manifestation of Jesus at His coming. But they who make Jesus their hope shall enter into rest *now*, a rest as blessedly secure as the new covenant.

Do you believe this ? Have you this rest ? Then you can understand the need of the Gospel in South America, for these people are kept shut out from Jesus as by a wall of adamant. You see your responsibility to these people. This rest of soul is for them as well as for you. It came to you through the blood of Jesus and the martyrs. Beware ! lest you get a curse by hiding the light. Is not the eternal rest in the presence of Jesus enough ? Must you have ease for the flesh, too ? I can scarcely see to write as I think of the terrible shame that will cover multitudes who fill our churches. They eat and deck themselves while souls starve. And many who are called to walk and talk with our Wonderful Prince squander their time day after day in folly.

You who have met the King, and who wait for His coming, bear with me, and let us entreat God continually lest we be ensnared with the great throng.

I have every confidence that you are kept by God, though news comes slowly. I would the letter were more private, that I might speak more freely; for though the times of our fellowship in Jesus in one another's presence is a year past, yet the longing that you may be stronger and stronger in the Holy Spirit seems to deepen.

Farewell! And may our prayers be answered in this dark land.

Yours in the love of Jesus,

JOHN LINTON.